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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 0112

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,  
APRIL 17, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 17, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

Radikal: In response to what the fate of the US military presence in Saudi Arabia and Turkey would be as there was no more need for no flight zones in southern and northern Iraq, US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, declared that together with

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Ankara, the mission of ONW, and the military presence previously in Turkey for that objective had been deployed elsewhere.

Cumhuriyet/Milli Gazete: The US is continuing to remove military vehicles and equipment deployed at Iskenderun port. It is reported that the movement of the soldiers and equipment from Turkey would be completed by April 23. After departure of freighter "Cape Taylor" the previous day, a big quantity of military equipment, including six UH-60A type ambulance helicopters, were loaded on freighter "Cape Vincent" which will also carry the Patriot missile systems at Incirlik AFB. The lease term at Iskenderun port, where the US had been amassing military equipment since February 18, will expire tomorrow. But it is speculated that the US has extended the lease contract until April 23, and it is expected that the shipment of troops and military equipment would be completed by then. In the meantime, 40 more US soldiers left Batman base.

Sabah: The indictment wherein villagers threw stones and eggs at the US soldiers who went to a village near Sanliurfa where a US missile had erroneously fallen some time ago is kept confidential. It is reported that the Chief

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Public Prosecutor of Sanliurfa proposed to the Court of First Instance to keep the file confidential after the news about the case

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appeared in Sabah paper. Thus the villagers and their lawyers have been denied access to the files. In response to lawyers' demand for lifting the decision, the court said confidentiality of the file was essential for the successful result of the case.

Turkiye/Bolge: As a result of operations launched by Adana police, 6 alleged PKK militants were captured. The PKK suspects whose names have not been disclosed by the security officials are still under interrogation.

Evrensel: A hearing continued about Hasim Beyazgul, a deaf and mute shepherd, was killed on September 19, 2001 by soldiers affiliated with a Jandarma Unit while grazing his sheep. The father of the victim sued the soldiers at a court in Van on charges of "deliberate killing and unauthorized burying." Only the victim's father and his attorney, Murat Timur, attended the hearing yesterday which involved seven soldiers being tried in absentia. The hearing was adjourned to June 6, 2003 on the grounds that the documents had not been completed yet.

Sabah: Because of the amendments made in the Retirement Law, which now mandates retirement for public employees aged 61, 11 governors recently appointed by the AKP face compulsory retirement if the cabinet does not prolong their tenure with a special decree. The TNP General Director and Former Regional Governor, Gokhan Aydinler and governors of Hakkari and Van in the Adana Consular district will also be retired per the law.

Cumhuriyet: Turkey has been considering opening a 2nd Border Gate with Iraq and rescheduling Turkish Airlines, THY, flights to Baghdad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Coordination Meeting attended by public and private sector representatives decided the following issues: THY would start working on direct flights to Baghdad; work on opening the second border gate would be expedited, in addition to Habur gate; efforts would be made to ensure that foodstuffs and humanitarian relief items would be purchased and transported from Turkey; efforts would be made to build a direct railway to Iraq; the contracting sector would be enlivened; special projects credits would be given by Turkish Eximbank to promote exports and contracting services in Iraq; attempts would be made for Turkish companies to do oil prospecting in Iraq; and a competent representative would be sent to the office set up by the US for rebuilding of Iraq.

Bolge: The Turkish Air Lines' scheduled flights to Gaziantep, which were cancelled due to deployment of US troops at the airport for the war on Iraq, will restart on April 18.  
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